(c) what is the rationale behind this exercise when the issue of medicines is recorded by the Store-Keeper on the prescription itself and the C.G.H.S. beneficiary has to sign the Issue Register putting the date and his address?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) Instructions are already there that no registration of prescription is required for collection of Indented Medicines in the dispensary. Instructions will be reissued to all dspensaries.

Clearance of Medical Claims

3838. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2048 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 11th March, 1992 and state:

(a) the progress made in the clearance of these claims as on 20th July, 1992;

(b) the number of claims which are pending for the last more than 6 months; and

(c) by when the backlog is likely to be cleared and what mechanism has been devised so that such a huge backlog is not allowed to accumulate for such long periods?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) Out of the total pending medical claims of 2126, 2021 medical claims have already been settled.

(b) There are 105 medical claims pending for the last six months.

(c) As soon as the beneficiaries complete the prescribed formalities, the claims will be settled.

The settlement of medical reimbursement claims have been decentralised with effect from 1-4-1992 and the Ministries/Departments have been empowered to settle the medical claims where treatment has been taken from Government/ referral recognised hospitals.

Spread of AIDS in North Eastern States

3839. SHRI BHADRESHWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the cause of the outbreak of AIDS in the North-East;

(b) what kind of preventive measures have been taken by Government and the measures taken to educate the general public; and

(c) whether there is any cell in the Medical Colleges of these States to detect AIDS virus and if not, by when such a cell is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) The major cause of spread of HTV infection in North-Eastern states especially Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland has been found to be intravenous drug abuse among the young population of these states. The infection is passed on from one individual to another by sharing of common needles, according to a study by Indian Council of Medical Research nearly 94 per cent of intravenous drug users share the needles and majority of them use unclean needles. In addition, there have been other causes like heterosexual promiscuity and transfusion of infected blood in a few cases.

(b) Following preventive measures have been taken and are proposed to be taken to check the spread of HIV infection:—

— To create awareness among youths, IDUs, General Public, NGOs and